

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hon. Charles Bolden

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Bolden, Charles
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 28, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 MOV HD video files (1:59:46).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Aerospace engineer and military officer Hon. Charles Bolden (1946 - ) a retired Major General in the United States Marine Corps and pioneering NASA astronaut, is the Administrator of NASA. Bolden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 28, 2012, in Washington, D.C. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_229
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Aerospace engineer and military officer Charles F. Bolden, Jr. was born on August 19, 1946 in Columbia, South Carolina. He graduated from C.A. Johnson High School in 1964. Both of his parents, Charles and Ethel Bolden, were teachers and stressed the importance of education. Bolden received his B.S. degree in electrical science from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968, and earned his M.S. degree in systems management from the University of Southern California in 1977. Accepting a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps following graduation from the Naval Academy, he underwent flight training at Pensacola, Florida, Meridian Mississippi, and Kingsville, Texas.

Between June 1972 and June 1973, Bolden flew more than 100 combat missions into North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, in the A-6A Intruder while stationed in Nam Phong, Thailand. After returning to the United States, Bolden served in a variety of positions in the Marine Corps. He was then assigned to the Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland, where he completed his training in 1979. While working at the Naval Air Test Center's Systems Engineering and Strike Aircraft Test Directorates, he tested a variety of ground attack aircraft until his selection as an astronaut candidate in 1980.

Bolden's NASA astronautical career included technical assignments. He served as pilot on the Space Shuttle Columbia in 1986. In the wake of the Challenger disaster, he was assigned as the chief of the Safety Division. In 1990, he piloted the Space Shuttle Discovery to deploy the Hubble Space Telescope. Bolden served as the Mission Commander for Space Shuttle Atlantis in 1992 and the Space Shuttle Discovery in 1994. He logged more than 680 hours during these four flights.

Bolden left NASA and returned to the U.S. Marine Corps in 1997, and was assigned as the Deputy Commandment of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy. During Operation Desert Thunder-Kuwait in 1998, he was assigned as the Commanding General of the Marine Expeditionary Force. He was promoted to Major General in 1998. In 2003, Bolden retired from the Marine Corps and served as president of the American PureTex Water

Corporation. In 2009, President Barack Obama appointed Bolden as the top NASA administrator, making him the second astronaut and the first African American to serve in this position.

Bolden's military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. NASA awarded him Exceptional Service Awards in 1988, 1989, and 1991. In May of 2006, he was inducted into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame. Bolden and his wife, Alexis Walker, have two children: U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Anthony Bolden, and Michelle Bolden, M.D.

Charles Bolden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 28, 2012

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hon. Charles Bolden was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 28, 2012, in Washington, D.C., and was recorded on 4 MOV HD video files. Aerospace engineer and military officer Hon. Charles Bolden (1946 - ) a retired Major General in the United States Marine Corps and pioneering NASA astronaut, is the Administrator of NASA.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Bolden, Charles, 1946 -

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Bolden, Charles, 1946---Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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United States. Army

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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MilitaryMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden, August 28, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/6/2013 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### **Series I: Original Interview Footage, August 28, 2012**

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden, Section A2012\_229\_001\_001, TRT: 1:31:49 2012/08/28

Charles Bolden, Jr. begins by describing his current and former professional capacities, his list of favorites, and his family background. Bolden's mother, Ethel Martin, was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in December, 1917. Bolden's father, Charles Bolden, Sr., was born in Columbia, South Carolina, also in December, 1917. Both Bolden's parents attended high school in Columbia, followed by college at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina. Afterward, Ethel Martin established a career as a librarian in Columbia. Charles Bolden, Sr., served in World War II; after returning from the war, he built an illustrious career coaching high school football in Columbia. Bolden describes his childhood memories with his parents and his brother, Warren, in the Waverly district of Columbia. He graduated from high school in 1965, and then joined the Naval Academy. Bolden and his wife, Jackie, got married three days after he graduated from the Naval Academy.

African American families--South Carolina.

African American parents--Education--Southern States.

African American librarians--South Carolina.

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American.

Childhood--South Carolina--1950-1960.

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden, Section A2012\_229\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:06 2012/08/28

Charles Bolden, Jr. describes his early interest in science and mathematics, which was further cultivated through the encouragement that he received from his parents and school teachers. Bolden played on his high school football team, coached by his father, Charles Bolden, Sr. As early as the seventh grade, Bolden decided to join the United States Naval Academy following high school. He sent several letters to congressmen, senators, and to the vice president, expressing his intent. In 1964, Bolden joined the Naval Academy as one of seven African American cadets in his matriculating class. Bolden's encounter with segregation was particularly significant during his years in Maryland. His success at the Academy was influenced by the mentorship that he received from senior African American cadets, and from his adopted mother, Lilly Mae Chase. Bolden graduated from the Naval Academy in 1968, and served in the Marine Corps for thirty-four years.

African American children--Education--South Carolina--1950-1970.

High school football players--South Carolina--1960-1970.

African American football coaches--South Carolina.

United States Naval Academy--African Americans.

Adoptive parents.

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden, Section A2012\_229\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:20 2012/08/28

Charles Bolden, Jr. describes his career in the United States Marine Corps. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968, with a bachelor of science in naval science, and a minor in electrical science. Soon after graduation, Bolden

married his high-school sweetheart, Alexis (Jackie) Walker. Following in the footsteps of his early mentor from the Naval Academy, Major John Riley Love, Bolden joined the Marine Corps in 1968. After flight training, he chose to fly the A-6 Intruder class of attack aircraft. Bolden enlisted in the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, and was deployed from 1972 to 1973. Upon his return to the U.S., Bolden served in California in several capacities, including as a Marine Corps recruiter in Los Angeles, on the A-6 squadron at Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, and then as the executive officer at Marine Air Base Squadron 13, or MABS 13.

United States Naval Academy--Alumni.

United States. Marine Corps--African Americans.

African Americans--Marriage.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Participation, African American.

United States. Marine Corps--Officers.

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Charles Bolden, Section A2012\_229\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:31 2012/08/28

Charles Bolden, Jr. describes his career path following his return from the Vietnam War in 1973. While stationed on duty in California, Bolden pursued a Master of Science and Systems Management through the University of Southern California, completing the program through on-base venues of instruction. From 1978 to 1979, Bolden trained to become a test pilot with the Marine Corps. His aspirations toward space science came from a meeting with Dr. Ronald McNair, a pioneer amongst African American astronauts. McNair's success story inspired Bolden to apply to NASA's Astronaut Program, and he was selected to the program in 1980. Bolden successfully completed his first space mission aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia in January, 1986, becoming the fourth African American to travel into space.

University of Southern California--Graduate students.

Test pilots--Training of--United States.

McNair, Ronald E., 1950-1986.

African American astronauts--United States--History--20th century.